DesirMED Adaptation Festival:
The Mediterranean We Desire

IN COLLABORATION WITH

25th and 26th September 2026
Larnaka, Cyprus

In collaboration with Mediterranean Coast Day 2026 and the GreenLink project



DRAFT AGENDA

The Mediterranean we desire

Funded by the European Union

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Confederation
Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI

Day 1:
25 September - Coast Day 2026 celebration

Policy Panel Location: Allilodidaktiko, Saint Lazarus Square
Giant Interactive Map Location: Saint Lazarus Square
"Sketching on Location" Workshop: Saint Lazarus Square

Policy Event "Nature-based Solutions for Coastal Resilience in the Mediterranean"

Mediterranean coastal zones are increasingly exposed to anthropogenic pressures and the impacts of climate change, including erosion, sea-level rise, water scarcity and biodiversity loss. In response to these challenges, NbS are emerging as effective, sustainable, and multifunctional approaches that also deliver long-term socio-economic benefits.

Mediterranean Coast Day, the UNEP/MAP observance celebrated annually on 25 September, offers an opportunity to raise awareness, exchange experiences, and promote innovative approaches to coastal management, including NbS.

The 2026 edition in Cyprus will highlight the role of NbS in climate adaptation and coastal resilience, showcasing concrete examples from across the Mediterranean region. It will benefit from the presence and contributions from the partners of DesirMED, a project which places a strong emphasis on Nature-based Solutions.
The event will also highlight local and regional initiatives and contribute to strengthening regional cooperation within the framework of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

The event is jointly organised by the Department of Environment of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of Cyprus and PAP/RAC, with the support of the DesirMED partners, in particular its lead partner - CMCC.

After the end of the policy event, one of the main festival interactive acitivities will be available on St. Lazarus, the Giant Interactive Map, open to the public. *Important note: The map will be set in a different location, i.e., Europe Square for Day 2.*

Finally, the 'Sketching on Location' workshop will take place in the afternoon where participants will have the chance to experience space through on-location observational sketching (see GreenLink supported workshops Programme).

Draft Agenda

POLICY EVENT + ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME
COAST DAY CELEBRATION

8:30 - 9:00
Welcoming of the participants
Maria Hadjimichael, CMMI

9:00 - 9:30
Opening of the Med Coast Day
Opening remarks
- Elena Stylianopoulou, Deputy Director, Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Republic of Cyprus.
- Elisa Furlan, CMCC (Coordinator of the DesirMED project)
- Daria Povh Škugor, UNEP/MAP - PAP/RAC Director

9:30 - 9:45
MED Coast Day Ambassador's remarks
- Mediterranean Coast Day (video)
- Charis Nika, New Coast Ambassador

9:45 - 10:45
The importance of NbS and resilient coastal planning - panel discussion

Moderator: Ivan Sekovski, PAP/RAC Programme Officer
Panelists:
- Elyes Hamza, SPA/RAC, Director
- Daria Povh Škugor, UNEP/MAP - PAP/RAC Director
- Susanne Pedersen - IUCN Centre for Science and Knowledge (CSK), Director
- Michael Scoullos, Team Leader/WES-BCA

10:45 - 11:00
Q&A

11:00 - 11:20
Coffee break

11:20 - 12:20
Interactive poster session on Mediterranean case studies
Dialogues/exchanges of experiences/solutions across different projects and regions.

12:20 - 13:20
Pathways towards climate adaptation and NbS adoption - Panel discussion
Moderator: Louisa Shakou, CEA, Coordinator of Climate Change Adaptation
Panelists:
- Céline Damery, Conservatoire du littoral, Project Officer
- Effie Zikouli, Aradippou Municipality, EU Affairs Office
- Klitos Papastylianou, Terra Cypria, Head of Environmental Policy

13:20 - 13:30
Award ceremony for the winner of the DesirMED photo contest
Andrea Belmartino, University of Sassari

13:30 - 13:45
Overview of the Festival programme and closing remarks

13:45 – 15:00
Lunch and Tour of the Giant Interactive Map

15:00 - 19:00
Giant Interactive Map open to the public (St. Lazarus Square)

Poster Session info

DesirMED Demonstarting Regions posters

Beiras e Serra Da Estrela
Presenter: Mariana Oliveira, Innovation Division, Planning and Funding Programs Area Fundão

Valencia Region: Listening to nature for wild fires prevention
No presenter

Sardinia Region
Presenter: Michela Bazzoni, Researcher at CMCC

Split-Dalmatia Country
-Coastal Management and Planning in Split-Dalmatia County
Presenter: Ivan Sekovski, Programme Officer at PAP/RAC
-School Gardens as a Gateway to Transformative Adaptation
Presenter: Tea Kuzmicic Rosandic, Head of the Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development Department at SUNCE

Eastern Macedonia & Thrace
Presenter: Lambros Tsourgiannis, Director General of Internal Operation at
Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

Other posters

Assessing and Strengthening Nature-based Solutions: The IUCN Global Standard
Presenter: Pilar Marín, Marine & Coastal Project Officer at IUCN Med

Between Nature and Community: Climate Change Responses in the Sardinian Sheep Sector
Presenter: Andrea Belmartino, Post-doctoral researcher in ecological transition at University of Sassari

Draft Agenda

Day 2:
26 September - Interactive, open activities

Location: Europe Square

What is happening in Europe Square?

Open to all, festival participants and citizens will have the opportunity to discover adaptation and engagement initiatives from across the Mediterranean through a programme jointly supported by the DesirMED and GreenLink projects. Throughout the afternoon, simultaneous interactive activities will take place across Europe Square, including the DesirMED Giant Interactive Map, workshops, participatory activities, live music performances and networking opportunities.

What is the Giant Interactive Map?

Welcome to the DesirMED Giant Interactive Map, the largest phygital experience ever created about the Mediterranean. For these days, Europe Square becomes a whole sea: a place where children, families, neighbours and decision-makers can walk across the Mediterranean, from the Atlantic coast of Portugal to the shores of Larnaka.
But this is far more than a map to look at. It is a shared space to understand that our region is one connected body of land and water, where a drought in Greece, a wildfire in Valencia and the erosion of a Cypriot beach are chapters of the same story, and where the answers are shared too. Scanning, playing and exploring, visitors discover how eight European regions are learning to work together with nature. Through nature-based solutions that protect and restore forests, wetlands, dunes, rivers and seagrass, they adapt to a changing climate while benefiting both people and biodiversity.
Hosting the map places Larnaka and Cyprus at the heart of this Mediterranean journey, not as spectators but as protagonists of climate action, side by side with partners from across the basin and with the support of the European Union and Swiss cooperation. It turns science into experience, experience into pride, and pride into the everyday choices that build resilience.
Because the Mediterranean we desire is not something we wait for. It is something we transform, together. #WeTransforMED



GIANT INTERACTIVE MAP ACTIVITIES

15:00-15:20

Giant Map Exploration & Orientation Challenge
Kinesthetic warm-up: locating basins, mountain ranges and coastal ecosystems. EN-EL

15:20-16:00

QR Explorer & Live Leaderboard Challenge
Free QR scanning, on-device quiz and a live ranking announced over megaphone. EN-EL

16:00-16:15

Institutional welcome and introduction to the Giant Map (IUCN Med and Cypriot host partners; brief words from local authorities). EN-EL

16:15-16:45

Opening performance
The grandmother of Larnaka and the journey across the Mediterranean. Audience on the “coasts”, performers in the “sea”; it launches the journey across the map. EL

16:45 - 17:10

Augmented Reality Hologram Quest
Monk seal, Posidonia, flamingo, holm oak and carpenter bee at real size; photos and ecological role. EN-EL

17:10 - 17:30

GreenLink project interactive dance
Interactive performance by the T.E.A.M Hip Hop Collective, dance inspired by Mediterranean and contemporary rhythms.

17:30 - 18:15

DesirMED Climate Detective Workshop
Investigation and co-design of nature-based solutions for a region in crisis. EN-EL

18:15 - 18:40

Eco-Reporter Challenge
Role-play: “reporter” teams interview experts and present nature-based solutions. EN-EL

18:40-19:00

Cartographic Bingo
Fast search-and-recognition game on the map; lively and for all ages. EN-EL

19:00-19:30

Team Trivia & Knowledge Match
Competitive team finale: a research phase followed by timed rounds on the Giant Map. EN-EL

19:30-20:00

Closing performance with final messages
The performance is repeated for newly arrived audiences and wraps up the journey with the programme’s key closing messages.

20:00-20:30

Closing concert
The Windcraft Band - a 20-piece multicultural ensemble of wind players and rhythm section, with a fresh instrumental take on funk, pop and rock hits.

20:30

Closure of the Day

GREENLINK PROJECT ACTIVITIES

15:00-20:30 | Ongoing Interactive Activities
Running simultaneously with the **Giant Interactive Map activities**, the GreenLink project will offer a series of participatory activities throughout the afternoon, inviting visitors to explore themes of Mediterranean identity, culture, community, sustainability and connection. Visitors are welcome to join the activities at any time between **15:00 and 20:30.**

Mediterranean Connections Map
In this interactive mapping activity, visitors will be invited to explore the connections that link Cyprus with the wider Mediterranean and the world. Participants can mark their country of origin, family roots, places they have lived or studied, or locations that hold a special meaning to them, connecting them back to Cyprus using colored strings. Throughout the Festival, the map will gradually become a collective representation of the different cultures, journeys and identities that come together in Cyprus.

Boat of Memories & Messages of Hope
The Boat of Memories invites visitors to contribute a personal memory, reflection, wish or message of hope connected to the Mediterranean. Participants can add their messages to the installation throughout the Festival, gradually creating a collective expression of belonging, connection and hopes for the future of the Mediterranean and its communities.

If I Were Mayor
Visitors will be invited to imagine that they are Mayor for a day and consider what they would change in their city. Participants can propose one action or idea that could make their community more sustainable, inclusive, resilient or enjoyable to live in, encouraging people of all ages to reflect on the future of their local environment.

Food Map of Larnaca
The Food Map of Larnaca invites visitors to explore the city through its food, local products, traditions and favourite places. Participants can contribute foods, ingredients, dishes or locations that they associate with Larnaca, creating a collective picture of the city's food identity. The activity will also encourage reflection on the connections between local food, cultural heritage, the environment and more sustainable consumption.

GREENLINK PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Live Community Mural with artist Francis Mupini
Throughout the Festival, visitors will have the opportunity to watch a large-scale artwork develop in real time and contribute to its creation. Guided by the artist, participants can add colors, symbols, words or messages inspired by the Mediterranean, creating a collective mural exploring themes of connection, diversity, belonging, movement and hope.

Passport to the Mediterranean
The Passport to the Mediterranean will invite visitors to explore the different Festival activities while completing small challenges and collecting stamps along the way. Designed as an interactive journey through the Festival, the passport encourages participants to discover different Mediterranean activities and themes while engaging with the installations, workshops and experiences taking place throughout the day.

Mediterranean Dance Experience with T.E.A.M Hip Hop Collective
Throughout the Festival, the GreenLink dancers will bring movement and energy to the programme through interactive dance activities and engagement with visitors. Throughout the afternoon, visitors can join a participatory dance-teaching session, learning simple movements and choreography in an accessible and informal setting. A dedicated dance performance will take place from 17:10-17:30, while the dancers will also accompany The Windcraft Band during the closing concert at 20:00-20:30, bringing dance and live music together for the Festival's final celebration.

GREENLINK PROJECT
SUPPORTED WORKSHOPS

FRIDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER 17:00-18:00

Sketching on Location workshop

In this Introductory 'Sketching on Location' workshop, artist Chloe Finn will guide participants and invite them to experience space through on-location observational sketching. Focusing on being present and given demonstrations and sketching techniques, the group will head outdoors to capture the impression of their surroundings. Participants will also be introduced to the concept of Nature-based Solutions and their role in climate adaptation. They will be asked to incorporate NbS into their drawings, imagining how public space can become more pleasant.

Participation is free. Registrations are accepted by email: chloe.fnn@gmail.com
Starting point: St. Lazarus church square, Time: 17:00.

The final pieces will be displayed in a small exhibition during the Adaptation Festival which will take place at Europe Square on Saturday, 26th September.

SATURDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 17:00-20:00

A Walk with and among Other bodies – Walking workshop

The Koullou|Makka Collective invites people for a walking-based experience, an invitation to rethink our relationship with nature and climate change, approaching the environment through movement, creative writing, and play. Participants will move through the centre of Larnaka, starting from Europe Square and making stops at different locations. At each station, participants will take part in a different creative and experiential activity, in an effort to move beyond the usual human perspective.
The workshop is deaf and disability-friendly and welcomes people with any form of disability. The necessary services to ensure accessible and equitable participation can be provided upon request, through the registration form.

(The pace of the workshop will respect different movement speeds, as well as individual needs for pauses and rest.)

Participation is free. Click here to learn more and register here.

EUROPE SQUARE STANDS

CYPRUS MARINE & MARITIME INSTITUTE

The Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI) is a Centre of Excellence for marine and maritime research, innovation and technology development, based in Larnaca, Cyprus. CMMI works to promote sustainable Blue Growth by developing scientific knowledge, technologies and solutions that address the needs of society and the marine and maritime sectors. Its research spans areas including marine technology and robotics, ocean observation, marine and coastal ecosystems, maritime digitalisation, marine cultural heritage, and marine and maritime policy.

At its stand, visitors will explore different ways in which science and technology can help us understand and protect the marine environment and underwater cultural heritage. Through digital applications, sensor demonstrations, 3D models and virtual reality, they will discover how climate change affects underwater archaeological sites, how scientists collect and interpret marine data, how citizens can contribute observations through the COSEA App, and how important Mediterranean marine habitats can be explored in an immersive and interactive way.

DesirMED

DesirMED stand will be in Europe Square to share the project focus, activities and achievements. You will have tha chance to know about the DesirMED Climate Ambassadors network and meet Alex, the DesirMED comic character who is travelling across the Mediterranean. With a backpack, a curious mind and a journey stretching across the Mediterranean, Alex will discover how people and nature can work together to face a changing climate.

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25th and 26th September 2026
Larnaka, Cyprus



OUR SPEAKERS

The Mediterranean we desire

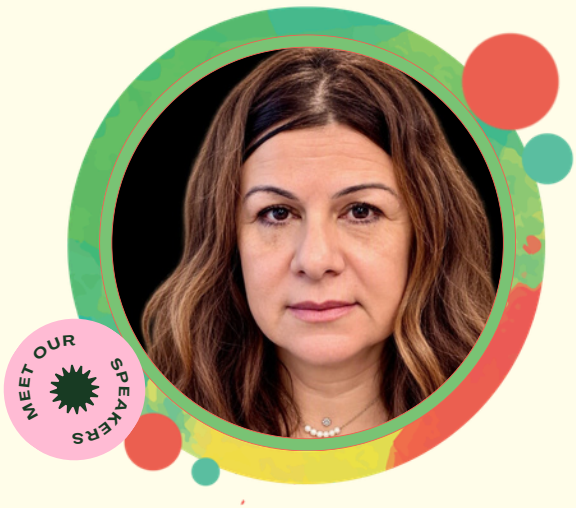
MEET OUR SPEAKERS



ELISA FURLAN

CMMC Senior Researcher
DesirMED Coordinator

Elisa Furlan is a Senior Scientist at the CMCC Foundation and Adjunct Professor at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Her research focuses on climate change risk assessment and adaptation pathways for coastal and transitional ecosystem. She combines machine learning-based modelling and strategic foresight to assess socio-ecological vulnerability to multi-hazard risks and the potential of Nature-based Solutions.
She leads the CMCC Research Unit on "Transformative Adaptation Measures and Planning for Resilience," supporting transformative societal change through scenario planning and the integration of stakeholder and decision-maker visions. As Project Coordinator of the Horizon Europe projects DesirMED and GRACE, she works to translate scientific knowledge into transformative, climate-resilient planning, with a strong focus on community engagement and capacity building. She is also a Coordinating Lead Author for Chapter 7, "Societal transformation for a sustainable future," of the MedECC Second Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR2).



ELENA STYLIANOPOULOU

Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Republic of Cyprus
Deputy Director

Elena Stylianopoulou is Biologist and studied at Brown University, USA with graduate studies in Energy and Environmental Management.
She has worked as a consultant in the field of the environment for several years before the Department of the Environment in 2001. She has worked in the field of environmental management, environmental impact assessment, ecolabel, waste management and nature and biodiversity.
She is currently coordinating the waste management policy and nature and biodiversity sectors.

MEET OUR SPEAKERS



DARIA POVH ŠKUGOR

PAP/RAC Director

Daria Povh Škugor is Director of the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC) of UNEP/MAP. For over two decades she has been leading and participating in the numerous coastal management and coastal adaptation projects, from the Mediterranean to city level. Using integrated, systemic approach she gained on-the-ground experience of policy-science-community collaboration. Her main interest lies in SDG 17 – building partnerships for action. She is advocating for climate action and sustainability as a presenter, guest lecturer and a key note speaker. She holds a MSc in Coastal zone management (Ulster) and BSc in Economy of coastal zones (Split).



SUSANNE PEDERSEN

IUCN Centre for Science and Knowledge (CSK) Director

Susanne Pedersen joined IUCN as the Director of the Centre for Science and Knowledge (CSK) in June 2023. She has experience from international organizations, a science-based advisory centre, an innovation community, industry associations and consulting engineering firms. Prior to joining IUCN, she worked as the Assistant Director-General of the Global Green Growth Institute and Managing Director of Climate-KIC Nordic. She also spent 2 years as the Director of the UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC) engaged in implementing UNEP's Climate and Energy Program.

MEET OUR SPEAKERS



PROF. MICHAEL SCOULLOS

Team Leader/WES-BCA

Michael J. Scoullos is Professor Emeritus at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and Director of the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean. He is Founder and Chairman of MIO-ECSDE and a leading figure in Mediterranean environmental policy, education, and water governance, currently serving as Team Leader of the EU-funded WES-BCA programme.



ELYES HAMZA

SPA/RAC Director

Mahmoud Elyes Hamza is Director of the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Center (UNEP/MAP). He previously served as Tunisia's Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources, and Fisheries (2021–2023), President of IRESA (2017–2021), and Director of INAT (2009–2017). A professor specializing in rural engineering, water, and forests, he has held senior leadership roles in agricultural education and research since 1988.

MEET OUR SPEAKERS



CHARIS NIKA

New Coast Ambassador

Charis Nika is an architect and urbanist whose work spans across research, pedagogy, and practice. Her work focuses on the environmental, social, and political dimensions of architecture and urbanism.
Charis is a PhD Candidate at the Department of Architecture of the University of Cyprus and works as a researcher at the Laboratory of Urbanism (LUCY). Her research explores how critical urban practices can address issues of spatial justice in the Cypriot coastal zone within the broader context of contemporary urbanisation.
Alongside her academic work, Charis leads practice-based projects with diverse collectives and bottom-up initiatives. In 2025, her project "Coastal Urban Futures" received the TIDAL ArtS Lighthouse Grant, supporting the co-creation of alternative futures for the coast of Larnaca. She holds an MSc in Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences from TU Delft and a BSc in Architectural Studies from Cardiff University.



CÉLINE DAMERY

Conservatoire du littoral
Project Officer

After a postgraduate cursus in marine and coastal management and conservation, Céline Damery joined in 2008 the Europe and International Department of the Conservatoire du littoral (french Public Agency dedicated to coastal protection) as project officer and became in 2026 Vice-Director for International and Patronage. She is involved in the development and implementation of international cooperation programs, notably with Mediterranean, Europe and Western-Africa countries. Over the years, she has been involved in projects in link with conservation and sustainable development of coastal natural sites and small islands, providing both institutional and technical expertise on various topics such as ecological restoration, management of visitors, development of partnerships and coastal adaptation to climate change.

MEET OUR SPEAKERS



EFFIE ZIKOULI

Aradippou Municipality
EU Affairs Officer

Effie Zikouli is an EU affairs and communications professional working with the Municipality of Aradippou, Cyprus, where she focuses on climate resilience, sustainable development and European partnerships. She has supported the municipality's participation in Pathways2Resilience, helping develop its climate adaptation strategy, action plan and investment priorities, while working with European institutions and local stakeholders to advance municipal projects. Drawing on more than two decades of experience in broadcasting, media and international events, Effie uses strategic communication to bridge European policy and local communities. She is the founder and CEO of ST76 Ltd and president of the Athlin Foundation.



KLITOS PAPASTYLIANOU

Terra Cypria
Head of Environmental Policy

Klitos Papastylianou holds a BA in Political Science and History from Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens, and a Master of Science in Environmental Social Science from the School of Social Sciences, Sociology and Social Research of the University of Kent, Canterbury. During the past 20 years, he has gained extensive professional experience with non-governmental organisations, active in the fields of environmental protection, sustainable development, human rights, social justice, peace, and reconciliation. He is currently the Head of Environmental Policy in Terra Cypria – The Cyprus Conservation Foundation.

MEET OUR MODERATORS



IVAN SEKOVSKI

PAP/RAC
Programme Officer

Ivan Sekovski has been working at the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC) of UNEP/MAP since 2015, contributing to projects on coastal planning and management, nature-based solutions, climate resilience, and marine and coastal monitoring. His work focuses on supporting sustainable and climate-resilient development of coastal areas, with an emphasis on integrating environmental knowledge into planning and decision-making. He has experience working at the interface of science, policy and practice across the Mediterranean region. He holds a PhD in Marine and Coastal Management from the University of Cádiz, an MSc in Water and Coastal Management from the University of Faro, and an MSc in Marine Biology and Ecology from the University of Split.



LOUISA MARIE SHAKOU

Cyprus Energy Agency
Coordinator of Climate Change Adaptation

Louisa Marie Shakou is an Environmental Scientist with a master's in Chemistry from Leeds University, and an MSc in Environmental Technology from Imperial College London, with a specialisation in Environmental Economics and Policy.

Louisa began her career as a Researcher in the Energy, Climate Change and Sustainability team at the National Audit Office of the UK Government. She held positions at TUV Cyprus Ltd, as a member of audit teams, conducting inspections against ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001:2004, and EMAS. She has been a visiting lecturer at the Higher Hotel Institute Cyprus and was a Research Associate at the Centre for Risk, Safety, and Environment at the European University Cyprus, where she was the principal investigator of the Horizon 2020 funded project EU-CIRCLE 'a pan-European framework for strengthening the resilience of critical infrastructure to climate change'. She has participated in 15 EU-funded projects in her career as an environmental scientist and climate change expert.

Louisa joined the Cyprus Energy Agency as a Climate Change Expert in 2019. Her interests and expertise are on assessment of climate change risks, climate change resilience and adaptation, and nature-based solutions. Since 2023, she is the Climate Change Adaptation Coordinator of the Cyprus Energy Agency.

MEET OUR MODERATORS



MARIA HADJIMICHAEL

CMMI
Senior Associate Scientist

Maria Hadjimichael is a Senior Associate Scientist at the Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute in Cyprus. She is a researcher in the broader fields of marine and coastal governance. She has an interdisciplinary background and leads CMMI's Centre of Ocean Governance and International Cooperation. She has extensive experience in both researching and engaging in the processes around the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management, and Marine Spatial Planning in Cyprus and beyond.

DesirMED

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Enjoy!

